

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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O R 170846Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6086

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AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T SEOUL 2008

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UNGA, KS

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER ALLUDES TO UN POLICY IN NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY INTERPELLATIONS

BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

1. RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS FROM SEVERAL NATIONAL
ASSEMBLYMEN, ROK PRIME MINISTER CHOE KYU-HA SAID MARCH 16,
AND AGAIN MARCH 17, IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INTERPELLATIONS
THAT ROKG WOULD , IN CONSULTATION WITH ITS ALLIES AND
FRIENDS, DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO SUBMIT A RESOLUTION
ON THE KOREAN QUESTION TO THE UNGA AGAIN THIS YEAR.
CHOE SAID THE ROKG DID NOT WANT TO SEE THE KOREAN
QUESTION DEBATED UNNECESSARILY EACH YEAR AT THE UNGA
BECAUSE IT SERVED ONLY TO ESCALATE TENSION BETWEEN
SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA RATHER THAN HELPING TO SOLVE
THE KOREAN ISSUE.

2. ACCORDING TO THE OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF THE MARCH 16
PROCEEDINGS, CHOE SAID "THE ROKG HAS COME TO HAVE DOUBTS
ABOUT THE WISDOM OF CONTINUING TO DISCUSS THE UN
QUESTION IN THE SAME WAY IN THE UN EVERY YEAR. THEREFORE
THE ROKG IS VERY SCRUPULOUSLY EXAMINING WHETHER OR
NOT TO CONTINUE TO DISCUSS THE KOREAN QUESTION AT THE UN,
AND AT THE SAME TIME, WITH THIS IN MIND, THE ROKG IS GOING

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TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT WITH FRIENDLY NATIONS WHICH

SUPPORT THE ROK AND ASK FOR THEIR CLOSE COOPERATION. ADDITIONALLY THE ROKG WILL CLOSELY EXAMINE THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL SITUATION FROM NOW ON. THEN WE WILL DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO DISCUSS THE KOREAN QUESTION AT THE UNGA. THIS IS A DELICATE DIPLOMATIC ISSUE WHICH WE DO NOT WANT TO DISCUSS IN DETAIL HERE BECAUSE IT INVOLVES UN STRATEGY. I CAN TELL YOU, HOWEVER, THAT WE SHOULD AVOID SUCH UNNECESSARY DEBATE."

3. THE SAME QUESTION WAS RAISED IN THE MARCH 17 INTERPELLATIONS AND THE PRIME MINISTER AGAIN REPLIED IN THE SAME VIEN, SAYING THAT "SINCE PAST UN RESOLUTIONS CALLING FOR DIRECT DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA HAVE BEEN REPEATEDLY IGNORED BY NORTH KOREA, WE SEE LITTLE UTILITY IN CONTINUING THAT DEBATE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS VERY SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT WHETHER WE SHOULD REPEAT THE DEBATE AGAIN THIS YEAR IN THE UN. THE GOVERNMENT WILL PURSUE A DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH NORTH KOREA." CHOE AGAIN REFUSED TO PROVIDE FURTHER ELABORATION PUBLICLY BECAUSE IT INVOLVED DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY.

4. ALTHOUGH CHOE'S MARCH 16 UN REMARKS WERE HEADLINED IN THE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE KOREA TIMES, THEY RECEIVED LITTLE ATTENTION FROM THE KOREAN LANGUAGE PRESS, WHICH GAVE TOP COVERAGE TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TREATMENT OF THE MARCH 1 MYONGDONG INCIDENT. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

EMBASSY COMMENT: BEGIN EXDIS/SECRET

ACCORDING TO AMEMBASSY EMPLOYEE WHO WAS PRESENT, THE OVERALL IMPRESSION LEFT BY CHOE'S REMARKS WAS CLEARLY THAT THE ROKG DOES NOT INTEND TO INTRODUCE A RESOLUTION ON THE KOREAN QUESTION THIS YEAR. THIS IS FURTHER THAN ANY ROKG OFFICIAL HAS GONE PREVIOUSLY IN LAYING OUT ROK VIEWS PUBLICLY REGARDING UN AND WILL CLEARLY MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR ROKG TO ADOPT IMPARTIAL APPROACH TO FORTHCOMING CORE GROUP MEETING. WE ARE ALSO STRUCK BY EMPHASIS IN CHOE'S REMARKS ON ROKG VIEWS, PLANS, AND DECISION MAKING PREROGATIVES AND VIRTUAL LIP SERVICE PAID CONSULTATION PROCESS. UNLESS DEPARTMENT HAS OBJECTIONS I PROPOSE TO REVIEW PROBLEM WITH ACTING

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FONMIN IN NEXT FEW DAYS. END SECRET/EXDIS
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